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## EDITORIAL NOTES

GEORGE HERBERT LOCKE

THERE have lately gone into effect in Prussia certain changes in secondary education which have a decided interest for us. The practice of all Gymnasien (with the exception of the few reformed schools about which Dr. Thiergen has written in the SCHOOL REVIEW) has been to commence Latin in the *Sexta* (the lowest class), French in the *Quarta* (the third from the lowest), Greek in the *Untertertia* (the fourth from the lowest), and to teach English as an optional subject in the highest three classes. The king now recommends English to be taught as far as *Untersekunda* as an alternative subject to Greek (for three years therefore); English is to take the place of French as an obligatory subject, French the place of English as an optional subject in the highest three classes of Gymnasien situated in towns where local conditions would warrant the change. For the Oberrealschule the recommendation is that special emphasis be placed on the teaching of geography and that more time be given to it. A great stimulus to secondary education has been the military certificate granted upon the completion of a six years' course of study. This might be accomplished by graduating from the Realschule which had only a six years' course or by being promoted in the first grade schools with their six years' course from *Untersekunda* to *Obersekunda*. The certificate entitles the holder to substitute one year's military service with enhanced status for the ordinary term of two years. Before 1892 the certificate of promotion in a first grade school was sufficient, but with the revised curriculum of that year a special government examination was established with the object of encouraging a certain completeness of work in the six years and also that the stream of university aspirants might be checked. This last reason is very interesting to us who are working for exactly the opposite end. The examination did not accomplish the results desired. The aspirants for the university education grew in numbers, and now it is to be abolished. A further interesting development is the royal encouragement given to the schools that are proposing to work on what is known as the Frankfurt plan. This means that the differentiation between the Gymnasium and the Realgymnasium comes later than in the old established plan. There is found a common basis extending over three years for all types of secondary schools by beginning French in the lowest class and postponing Latin to *Untertertia* (fourth class from the lowest); further by postponing Greek in the Gymnasium to *Untersekunda* (sixth from the lowest), and English in the Realgymnasium to the corresponding class. In this way

a common curriculum is made possible for the classical and semi-classical schools. These are significant reforms, and the results will be watched with great interest by students of secondary education.

SINCE we have commented on the recent action of the Emperor of Germany in regard to secondary education it may be of interest to reproduce a letter written at Potsdam, April 2, 1885. This appears in a book just issued, entitled *Our Emperor and School Reform*, and we are indebted to the London *Morning Post* for the copy :

Gehrter Herr Amtsrichter—Accept my heartiest thanks for the two pamphlets which you sent to me. I have read “What we are Suffering From” with great interest, and still greater pleasure. At last, then, some one has stepped forth to attack with energy this petrified and most soul-killing of all systems. I subscribe every word you have written. Fortunately, I had two and a half years in which to convince myself of the manner in which our youth are sinned against. On many things which you adduce I have myself pondered in silence. To mention only a few : Of the twenty-one “Primaner” who composed our class, nineteen wore spectacles, and of these three had to call in the additional assistance of a pince-nez in order to read what was on the blackboard !

Homer, the glorious man, for whom I greatly “enthused,” Horace, Demosthenes, whose orations must inspire everyone—in what manner were they read ? With any enthusiasm for the descriptions of the battle, the arms, or of nature ? Heaven forbid ! Every sentence was divided and quartered with the dissecting knife of the grammatical, fanatical philologists, until the skeleton was snugly laid bare, and the general admiration claimed for the number of manners in which *ἀν* or *ἐπι* could be placed. The Latin and Greek essays (a monstrous nonsense), what an amount of time and trouble they swallowed ! And what stuff it was that finally was produced ! Horace would have given up the ghost at sight of it !

Away with this rubbish ! War to the knife against such teaching ! The result of this system is that our schoolboys are better versed in the syntax and grammar of the ancient tongues than the old “Greeks” themselves, that they know by heart the generals, battles, and order of battle in the Punic and Mithridatic wars, but are very much in the dark concerning the battles of the Seven Years’ War, to say nothing of the “far too modern” wars of ’66 and ’70, which they have not “yet had” !!!

In regard to the physical aspect of school life, I am decidedly of the opinion that the afternoon should be free once and for all. The “Turnunterricht” (gymnastics hour) ought to give the boys pleasure. Obstacle races and climbing would be valuable innovations. In the towns where there is a garrison, it would be very desirable if two or three times a week a non-commissioned officer were to train and drill the elder boys with the aid of poles, and in place of the so-called class walks (with elegant walking sticks, black coat, and cigar) a regular march with some field service, even if it were to degenerate into games and horseplay, would be preferable.

Our “Primaner”—we unfortunately had the same faults—were far too *blasé* to take off their coats and get to blows. What can one expect from such little people ? *Guerre à outrance*, therefore, against this system. I am right willing to assist you in your effort. I am rejoiced to meet with one who speaks “German” and acts with energy.

Yours,

WILLIAM, PRINCE OF PRUSSIA

THE problem of commercial education—of commercial courses in our high schools or of commercial high schools—is now one of the most difficult problems we have to solve. It presents but little difficulty in *theory*, for many superintendents and principals outline a course of study which they think will give an adequate training and then wonder that the product of this education is not received with open arms by the merchants who are to receive this so-called finished product. Some of these commercial courses are wonderfully constructed, partly from analogy to the other courses in the school, partly from the accounts given by educational travelers of what is being done in Germany and other foreign countries, and partly again from the ideas which these course makers have of what a commercial education should be. A rational way of looking at this subject is to ask the employers of our graduates who go into business where the defects in our training show themselves and what suggestions can be given toward remedying these defects. In other words, what does a business man expect from a graduate of a high school? At a recent meeting of the Merchants' Club of Chicago, Mr. John G. Shedd, of Marshall Field & Co., said that he was deeply impressed with the great necessity and value of a radical change in the course for a large percentage of the pupils who intend to follow a business career. He advised two separate courses, a four years' course for those who can afford to continue higher education, and a two years' special business course which will include arithmetic, mental and written; writing, including business correspondence; rhetoric; commercial geography; and a short course in book-keeping, accounting, and physics. He emphasized the fact that business men are looking for the high-school graduate and the college graduate, for among them will be found the successful business men of the future. The faults, as he has seen them, are that the young man seems to impress his prospective employer with the thought that he seeks business as a necessity and not from choice; that he prefers a profession but cannot afford it. His written application shows lamentable deficiency in penmanship and he stumbles at the simplest arithmetical problem. When informed that his total of the given figures is incorrect, he discovers that he mistook his 1 for a 7, or his 3 for a 5, showing again faulty penmanship. In simple fractions he struggles away until finally, by some long process, he may reach the correct result, but he seems to have no idea of the shorter methods practiced in the business world. A visit to many of our schools will reveal the truth of this last remark, where one will find pupils struggling away with the H. C. F. and the L. C. M., working them out—some thirty or forty examples—by the long, antique process described in the book and insisted upon by the teacher. It seems to be still unsafe to wander far from the book. Mr. Shedd was not so far wrong when he said that he feared that from grammar school to university the suggestions and teachings of those charged with instruction are logically toward the professions as being in harmony with educated thought. Mr. Farwell, of the John V. Farwell Company, endorsed what Mr.

Shedd had said, and added that to be successful in business a young man must have character, ability, and physical endurance. He had found these in the graduate of the rural high school rather than in the graduate of the city high school. Our schools will need to develop self-reliance, and power to organize the acquired knowledge, if we are to turn out men who will make their way in this day of sharp business competition where intelligence and resourcefulness are so necessary.

THE School Board of Chicago, on the advice of Mr. Nightingale, has abolished the elaborate graduation exercises of the high schools. Hereafter these will be simple in character and will be held in the high schools instead of in some large hall or theater down in the heart of the city. It was mainly because of the expense incurred by parents to suitably garb their children and provide them with flowers and other incidentals deemed necessary by the children.

It will be remembered that Mr. H. R. Corbett made some interesting investigations into the problem of rural high schools and contributed the results to this journal during last year. It seems that his deduction that this was a live question was correct for there is a bill now before the Michigan legislature permitting the establishment of such schools. It provides that the board shall call an election on this subject on petition of not less than one third of the voters of the township, and if the proposition carries the township may bond itself for \$5000.

THE teachers of New York City have urged from time to time that their salaries ought to be increased and that in many instances the janitor of a public school received a larger salary than the principal. This assertion has been unexpectedly proved in the *City Record* just issued by the municipal authorities :

E. H. Terwilliger, janitor of School No. 1, draws \$3887 annually and William H. Ettinger, principal of the same school \$3250. Henry Cassidy, principal of School No. 5 is paid at the rate of \$3250 a year and C. K. Birdsall, who sees that the same building is swept out and that the fires are kept burning, gets \$4420. Of the 180 janitors of public schools in New York City, 26 draw salaries of \$3500 a year or more. Quite a number are paid more than \$4000 each, while hundreds of teachers are on the rolls at \$600 a year. Even some of the professors and practically all of the assistant professors and instructors in the College of the City of New York are paid less than the leaders among the head janitors of the public schools.

MR. SIDNEY WEBB, vice chairman of the Technical Education Board of the London County Council, recently contributed to the *Daily Mail* a series of articles on "Middle-Class Education in London," from one of which we take the following particulars of the secondary endowed and aided schools in London :

Besides the elementary schools of the London School Board, London has now an excellent series of public secondary schools, four-fifths of which are aided, inspected, and directed by the London County Council. These are largely maintained out of

old endowments, reorganized by the Charity Commissioners. But during the past eight years most of them have been put on a new basis by the county council, which has, by its liberal subsidies, built excellent science laboratories, greatly improved the teaching, modernized the curriculum, and lowered the fees in the old schools, and caused several new ones to be opened.

London has in this way over sixty schools, providing every kind and grade of secondary education out of public funds, and under public management. Some thirty-five of these are for boys, nineteen for girls and six "mixed." These schools are, of course, open to all classes, but they are specially adapted for middle-class children. In no other city in the world has the middle-class parent so large a choice. . . . The public secondary schools are not, indeed, free; most of them charge a fee of £2 or £3 per term, though some go as low as £1, and a few run up to £6 or £8 per term. But the education provided costs far more than the fee. The school board gives, for nothing, an education costing some £5 a year. The public secondary schools under the county council give, for an average fee of £5 a year, an education costing £10 to £25 for each boy or girl. . . . It is sometimes supposed that these old foundation schools do not give a modern or so-called "commercial," education — this is a mistake. The London County Council has seen to it that these schools provide a first-rate modern education. The schools are, indeed, not all of one pattern. Cast-iron uniformity does not do in secondary education; and for this reason, among others, each school is left to be managed by its own body of "governors." One school makes a speciality of science and mechanics; another is distinguished for modern languages. Some schools work up their best boys or girls for Oxford and Cambridge; others aim more at preparing for business careers. . . . East London has eight of them; South London more than twice as many. Some, like the Whitechapel Foundation School, are specially good in foreign languages, teaching not only French and German, but also Spanish; others, like St. Dunstan's College, Catford, excel in science and mechanics, and are specially suited to boys intending to be engineers or chemists.

At University College School the county council has set up a first-grade commercial school, equal to anything on the continent. Here a boy will get the very best preparation not for a mere junior clerkship, but for the more responsible positions in the world of commerce. The Addey and Stanhope Schools, at Deptford, have, perhaps, the finest school and buildings in England. Dame Alice Owen's Schools, at Islington, and the Aske Schools, at Hatcham, have an all-round excellence which it would be difficult to find surpassed. The Latymer Schools, at Hammersmith, are more than full. The Coopers' Schools, Parmiter's School, and the Raine School provide a sound commercial training for East-end boys. No fewer than six schools are attached to polytechnics, and enjoy the benefit of their scientific teachers and laboratories.

There are many others equally as good which I am unfair in not mentioning. Most of those named provide for girls as well as boys, while others, like the Camden and Datchelor Schools, give a first-rate education for girls only. And above them all stand London's magnificent first-grade schools, such as St. Paul's, Dulwich, the City of London School, the North London Collegiate School for Girls, and so on.